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Backed by Public, Administration Believes

JFK Undaunted by Cuba

By ROWLAND EVANS JR.

CPYRGH Democrat and Chronicle Special Service

WASHINGTON—The White House is neither concerned nor upset by the sharp Republican attacks on President Kennedy's Cuba policy, which were continued along several new fronts yesterday.

The best political gains in the administration are convinced that President Kennedy has the solid support of a large percentage of the American people in its patient and unbelligerent posture toward China and Soviet activity there.

This consensus within the administration is a result of private information coming into the White House from around the country, which the White House believes is bolstered by several public opinion surveys published in recent weeks.

The administration also believes that the growing intensity of the Republican attacks may boomerang. A new line of attack was opened yesterday, for example, by Rep. Leslie Arends, R-Ill., the instant Republican leader in the House.

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In a speech at St. Petersburg, Fla., he charged that President Kennedy deliberately misled the country last October and concealed the presence of offensive Soviet missiles for several days.

Here in Washington, the attack on the administration's Cuba policy continued on the senate floor with another speech by Sen. Kenneth B. Keating, R-Rochester.

Without quite saying so, the senator strongly implied that John A. McCone, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was convinced long before Oct. 14 that offensive missiles would be positioned in Cuba.

The administration, he said, "kept busy denying everything" until Oct. 22, when "the frightening facts were suddenly officially unloaded on the American people."

"There are disturbing indications that an attempt is being made to use the intelligence community as a scapegoat and whipping boy for the present crisis of confidence in the government's handling of the Cuban situation," the senator said.

"In my judgment, however, we would be

placing the onus on the wrong source if we blamed the fact-gatherers rather than the policy makers for the failure to give the American people an accurate and complete picture of Communist activities in Cuba."

There is no "intelligence gap," he continued, but rather "unwillingness" of top officials to believe what intelligence producers "and in some instances deliberate attempts to suppress information entirely."

Keating has seen a good deal of McCone recently. There is reason to believe that some officials of the Kennedy administration are unhappy at McCone's apparently friendly relationship with the administration's No. 1 Cuba critic.

In a speech in the House, for example, Rep. Edith Green, D-Ore., an administration stalwart, pointedly remarked that President Kennedy himself is the only American who has the constitutional responsibility for conducting foreign policy — "not Sen. (Barry M.) Goldwater, Sen. Keating, Gov. Rockefeller and CIA director John A. McCone."

Critics